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Henry Hastings Hall to Sarah Bracher, 10 August 1870

Mandurah
Aug 10th 1870

My dear Sister

Mail after mail has passed and I have still been hoping against hope of being able to make you a remittance, that is the reason I have not written you sooner — and I only do so now to assure you that you shall hear from me to that effect so soon as I am able. I have from one source or another always been acquainted with your necessities and it has ever been a grief to me that I had not the power to assist you I suffered so severely from the fire that had it not been for my good name and the kind forbearance of creditors I must have gone through the Insolvent Court. Thank God I have been slowly recovering from that disaster and hope very soon to be clear of the world again.

I am sorry to inform you Shake has met with reverses and had to give up everything to his creditors, so that after toiling so long in that fearful hot climate he will have to begin the world again without anything and a wife and child make matters so much the worse, his affairs are not yet wound up but I do not think he will pay more than 10/- or 12/- in the pound. I don't know the amount of his liabilities, I believe he would have paid 20/- but several parties owing him money have failed since. Theodosia and her eldest daughter have lately been to Perth, she was to have call[ed] on us on her way back, but the unsettled weather prevented. I have not seen her for ten (10) years. I believe they were very kindly received at Govt House. Our new Governor Mr Weld conducts things at Govt House in something more like vice-regal style than any of his predecessors, he keeps some twenty servants, holds 'Levies' and 'Drawing Rooms' &c &c and now we are to have Representative Government Election by vote takes place in October. We are to have two Members for the Murray, as Fremantle is included in this District. The last two seasons have been comparatively dry, causing much distress, but we have lately been favoured with abundance of rain and accounts from all parts are most cheering. They are finding better 'prospects' of gold — an

authentic account just received from the Irwin states that a little nugget worth £4 and some small gold has been brought in to Champion Bay small as this is, it has doubtless caused some excitement in that neighbourhood and a party of police have been sent out to preserve order.

I have long felt certain that sooner or later we should have payable gold fields in this Colony and should have been prospecting myself if my means had permitted but come through what source they may the Colony must be benefitted. District Road Boards are established throughout the Colony, I have been elected a member for this district from the beginning, the six members are appointed annually. I have also the honor of being a member of the Council of the Diocesan Church Society which has enrolled nearly all the influential members of the Church of England Our Gov^r an able and good man in other respects is a Roman Catholic. A bona fide Company is formed for running Telegraphic Lines throughout the Colony — so don't you think we are going ahead. I forgot to say, a Railway is being laid at the Vasse for a Ballarat Timber Comp^y and other Companies of the same kind are forming. One won't be surprised after this to hear of Mandurah being lit with *gas*.

My wife after two or three mishaps presented me with a fine little boy on the 10th May last, I am happy to say he is going on satisfactorily, under the name of Leslie Peel. I think we were old enough to know better — but I suppose we couldn't help it. I was very glad to hear Fanny had succeeded in getting a School, I tried hard to send a few pounds when I knew she so much needed it — but could not do so. You may believe how destitute we were after the fire when I say my wife had not a single article of change of clothes, until I went to Town and got materials for her to make up. The cheapest necessities of every description or requirement had to be bought and it will be long — if ever — we have anything better. It was fortunate that the cottage I had built at Dedallah was empty at the time, we are still living in it. Shake and his wife are at Cardup, Fred Peel (or Proctor) and wife are staying with me until he has a house ready, when I expect Shake will reside with us until he can see a chance of doing something.

When S was in better circumstances he found me the money to buy a ten ton boat, I ran her between the Murray and Fremantle but the

bar here being closed all last winter, I gave her in charge to F Caporn to work at Fremantle, and the very first trip she was lost on the Swan bar with some £4000 of cargo on board from an English ship the *Hastings* - The loss to me was about £150, this occurred only a few months after the fire — so you see its not all sunshine.

We are building a new Church here. I am Chairman of the Building Committee. I gave an acre of land for the site. People subscribed very liberally. Few laboring men giving less than £1 — some £2 & £3. The old church near Peels was burnt down. The parson from Pinjarrah only visits once a month, but I believe the Bishop will constitute me a lay preacher.

Frank will have a Free pardon in Jan^y next. He has been long at Champion Bay working on his own account Remember me very kindly to Taylor I suppose he intends to settle in Victoria Kindest love to brother George and all the family from wife and self. Young Geo Shenton is striking up as Member for the North, and Marmions only son will try hard to get into Parliament for Fremantle — his father and mother are both dead and left him quite independent He wrote today to solicit my '*powerful influence and support*'. Old Mrs Sutton died two years ago today, the last of her family a nephew who married M'Lartys eldest daughter reigns in her stead, they live close to me and are excellent neighbours I will send you a dozen Papers God bless you all
Ever affectly yours
H H Hall